CONSUMER'S MARKET SERVICE

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The United States enters the war with relatively large total food supplies, larger than the total supplies on hand when the United States entered the first World War. Supplies, per person, of practically all domestically produced foods are slightly larger than they were at that time. The capacity for continued large production of agricultural products looks quite good in most all lines. Imported food items probably will be affected to some extent by shipping conditions, but the total food supply compares favorably with a year ago. Government purchases of some foods for war needs and allied aid may reduce supplies to domestic consumers in particular lines. Consumers' greater buying power also is helping to put up food prices.

The more immediate outlook indicates that Christmas and New Year dinners will cost more than a year ago. Compared with last year supplies are as follows:

Larger--<u>turkeys</u>, <u>beef</u>, <u>roasting chickens</u>, <u>broilers</u>, <u>butter</u>, <u>sweetpotatoes</u>, <u>dried beans</u>, <u>oranges</u>, <u>walnuts</u>, <u>filberts</u>, <u>cranberries</u>, <u>cabbage</u>, <u>shallots</u>, <u>cucumbers</u>, <u>eggplant</u>.

About the same--<u>lamb</u>, <u>eggs</u>, <u>apples</u>, <u>cauliflower</u>, <u>celery</u>, <u>peppers</u>.

Smaller--<u>boiling and stewing chickens</u>, <u>pork</u>, <u>tangerines</u>, <u>grapefruit</u>, <u>pears</u>, <u>potatoes</u>, <u>onions</u>, <u>snap beans</u>, <u>pecans</u>, <u>almonds</u>.

<u>Turkeys</u> are expected to be in larger supply for Christmas and New Year's than at Thanksgiving. Marketings from the rather large late hatch of last spring may be coming on the market and should result in a somewhat less tight situation than at Thanksgiving. There are lots of <u>cranberries</u> to garnish holiday meals. Supplies are about 25 percent greater than last year.

<u>Beef</u> supplies of better grades are somewhat less than a month earlier but slightly larger than a year ago. The proportion of better grade beef compared to total beef supplies is expected to decline after the first of the year.

<u>Chickens for roasting</u> are in relatively large supply. This is the season when farmers sell heavily and large quantities are now being sold out of farm flocks. <u>Boiling and stewing chickens</u> are less than last year as producers are keeping a larger number of hens for egg production. <u>Egg</u> production is larger than a year ago with total supplies available to domestic consumers about the same as last year. Egg prices may be expected to follow a downward trend from now until late spring as production increases seasonally. <u>Broilers</u> from early hatchings will be coming on the market the latter part of the month. They are higher priced at this time of the year than later when large supplies from farm flocks are sold. The supply of broilers is expected to increase seasonally as late spring and early summer approaches.

Pork is not so plentiful as a year ago. Prices may be expected to follow seasonal declines as the number of pigs marketed increases from now until late winter. Lard is in shorter supply than last year with higher prices than a year ago, which are expected to continue. Supplies of other oils and shortening compounds are less abundant than last year with prospects of continuing so. Cocoanut oils and palm oils may feel the effects of shipping difficulties in the Pacific.

Dairy products are expected to continue showing heavy production although supplies of evaporated milk and cheese for domestic consumers probably will continue about the same as last year but at higher prices. Butter supplies probably will be somewhat larger than last year with downward trends in prices from now until late spring as seasonal production increases.

Green vegetables from nearby gardens are through for the season. From now until spring supplies will come mostly from Southern or Pacific commercial areas. Root crops such as potatoes, sweetpotatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips and rutabagas now are seasonal items. Late cabbage supplies are larger than last year while cauliflower is about the same as a year ago. Other vegetables in large supply are eggplant cucumbers and shallots with celery and peppers not quite so large. There was a short crop of late onions. Prices are higher than last year with further increases in line with normal trends expected as supplies are limited to cold storage from now until the Texas crop of early Bermudas comes on in the spring.

Potatoes, due to a shorter crop, are higher priced than last year. Following the sharp rise in early October, prices have leveled off during recent weeks. Potato prices normally rise from fall until late spring when the succeeding crop of new potatoes takes over. Thus further increases from present market levels may be expected. Sweetpotatoes are more abundant than last year. However, supplies in the East are only moderate, while the Mid-west has much more than a year ago.

Tangerines, a favorite holiday fruit, are about one-third less than a year ago and considerably higher prices may be expected. December and January are the months of most plentiful supply. Oranges, both from Florida and California are more plentiful for the winter season than last year and, unless bad weather affects the supply, will continue so. Grapefruit is slightly shorter than last year and recent wholesale prices are roughly 15 percent higher than a year ago. The late season has delayed shipments on all citrus fruits but, barring freezes in producing areas, heavy movement is expected during the next several months.

Apples available for the rest of the winter and spring are considerably less than last year and prices are higher.

Fall and winter pears are now in season. The Bosc variety and the Anjou variety may be found in the market until the first of the year. The Easter Burre variety is on hand from now until next May. Winter Nelis variety will show up in the market in January and remain available until late spring. These pears are an excellent addition to the holiday fruit basket.

Walnuts are in relatively large supply and selling for only slightly more than a year ago. Pecan supplies are somewhat less than last year with considerably more of the "Paper Shell" variety but less seedlings. Filberts show a record high production. Almonds are a very short crop.